

# Adaptive Strategies of Parián Chinese Fictive Kinship and Credit in Seventeenth-Century Manila

Based on a seventeenth-century baptismal book of the Parián, a 1689 list of debts owed to non-Catholic Chinese, and a 1690 membership list for *gremios de sangleyes infieles*, this article argues that adaptation by the Chinese in Manila to secure themselves and their livelihoods followed two major strategies: (a) fictive kinship in the form of *compadrazgo* (coparenthood) and *padrinazgo* (godparenthood), and (b) extending credit. The Chinese used both strategies to create or solidify networks of mutual obligation and aid within their own community and with other residents of Manila. These strategies helped spin webs of interconnection that made colonial society stable and viable.

**KEYWORDS:** CHINESE · KINSHIP · CREDIT · GENDER · SPANISH MANILA

From the high stonewalls of Fort Santiago facing north toward the River Pasig, looking through the sights of his musket, a Spanish soldier would have been greeted by a curious sight: busy “streets and squares” lined with shops adorned with placards printed in strange characters into which people of all sorts disappeared only to emerge again with wrapped bundles in hand. One could only imagine the contents of each package, for it was said “the whole trade of China” could be found in what was in fact a great Chinese market. Closer to the ground, a Dominican priest strolling from the Church of the Three Kings would have seen the familiar faces of parishioners in their shops. As he walked through the streets, he might have frowned upon seeing Spaniards, *indios*, and Chinese mingling together, a meal just finished at one of the many Chinese eateries, engaged in a game of chance called *metua*. His attention might then have been drawn by a little mestiza girl tugging at his hand, beckoning him to come with her to see her mother and her brother whom he had just baptized the week before.<sup>1</sup>

Much imagination is needed to recreate the vibrant world of Chinese immigrants in seventeenth-century Manila since much of what we know about that world is based upon Spanish colonial sketches of life in the Philippines, which although revealing in some ways only leave hints at the social and power organizations and relationships at play in the colony. Furthermore, the difficulty in finding sources on Chinese life in early colonial Manila has discouraged scholarship on the topic. There is as yet no published book-length manuscript in the English language that focuses on the internal workings of the Philippine Chinese community or that community’s ties with larger colonial society in the period before 1850, and essays on the topic are relatively rare.<sup>2</sup> Earlier scholarship has tended to reproduce the concerns of Spanish colonial sources in focusing on the Manila Galleon trade, Chinese threats to Spanish rulership, and the sincerity of Chinese conversion to Catholicism (see Schurz 1939/1959) or focused on nationalist fears surrounding Chinese assimilation into the Filipino nation (see Felix 1966).<sup>3</sup> Between a focus on Spanish colonial preoccupations and Filipino nationalist anxieties, the study of Chinese ties with other residents of Manila in the beginning period of the establishment of a long-term Spanish presence in the Philippines has sadly been neglected, much to the detriment of our understanding of the Chinese role in the creation of the Spanish empire. Over the past fifteen years or so, the tide has begun to turn ever so slightly.

The contours of early Chinese life in Manila and the links that connected Chinese to colonial society have become somewhat clearer thanks to scholars like Nariko Sugaya, Lucille Chia, and José Eugenio Borao.<sup>4</sup> Using mainly Spanish sources—and Chinese genealogical records in the case of Lucille Chia—these scholars have provided glimpses at the internal workings of Chinese life in early colonial Manila. The good work of these scholars notwithstanding, the information is still sketchy and perceptions of pre-1850 Chinese life have had to rely on inferences from the period after 1850 or from anthropological work done by Jacques Amyot (1973) on the Manila Chinese in the 1950s. Consequently, a gap still exists in our understanding of how the Chinese organized themselves and related to others in early colonial Manila.

To go beyond ahistorical inferences and superficial descriptions of Chinese life, this article will excavate Spanish colonial documents to look more closely at the construction and function of the social and financial networks that bound the Chinese, indigenous, and Spanish communities together in seventeenth-century Manila. The article places at its center the seventeenth-century Chinese community of the Parián because its role as the linchpin of the Chinese, indigenous, and Spanish economies has yielded rare documentation that allows for the study of the intersections between these communities that made empire viable. Based on the baptismal records of the Parián of 1626–1700 and lists of non-Christian Chinese in Manila in 1689 and 1690 (AGI 1689, 1690),<sup>5</sup> I contend that the Chinese in Manila adapted to secure themselves and their livelihoods by using two major strategies: (1) ritual kinship in the form of *compadrazgo* (coparenthood) and *padrinazgo* (godparenthood), and (2) extending credit. The Chinese used both strategies to create or solidify networks of mutual obligation and aid within their own community and with other residents of Manila.

### **Compadrazgo and Padrinazgo**

In seventeenth-century Manila, the Catholic customs of *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* were used by Spanish, indigenous, and Chinese alike to create networks of mutual obligation. While the relationships of *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* were supposed to be—in the eyes of the church—ones of spiritual kinship, binding godparents to each other and to the child or convert as spiritual guides and sponsors in the faith, oftentimes the social relationships that came with the customs could not be decoupled from

the spiritual ones. This was true in Manila as it was in Spain and much of Western Europe.<sup>6</sup>

The church's preoccupation with the propensity for social relationships in *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* to be of as much concern as, if not take precedence over, spiritual ones did not appear only with the spread of Catholicism to the Philippines. The Western European roots of the concern are abundantly clear in the fact that in the Council of Trent (1545–1563), convened before the long-term Spanish presence in the Philippines had been established, the church found it necessary to prescribe the allowable number of godparents. “Indeed the council established that ‘only one, man or woman, according to the prescriptions of the holy canons, or at the most one man and one woman can be godparents at Baptism’ (*Sacred Council of Trent*, Session 24, chapter 2)” (quoted in Irigoyen López 2012, 77). Still, in the seventeenth century, this prescription was not fully accepted so that Francisco de Toledo of Spain could still write in 1619 that “Some of the congregation of the Council say that at baptism, the godparents can be a man instead of the woman, who should be the godmother, and that a woman may replace the man, who should be godfather” (quoted in *ibid.*, 77–78). Even as late as 1727, J. Ortiz Cantero (quoted in *ibid.*, 79) could pose the following scenario in his guide for priests:

If it should happen that a number of noblemen all want to be godparents to a child, and the parents had appointed them, and they insist despite the Priest informing them of the Council's disposition, and should the Priest fear a confrontation as a result of his opposition, he can pretend and with caution appoint one of the men and another woman, those who are the closest, to hold or touch the infant when he is baptised; and despite the rest touching him, only the two appointed persons contract kinship and are truly godparents. . . . And if the Priest, either through ignorance or fear, should accept many godparents, and they all touch the infant, write them all in, as it is very probable that they all contract spiritual kinship.

*Compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* had a strong social aspect to them in Spain in the seventeenth century and even into the eighteenth century. In that respect, *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* in the Philippines differed little from practices in Spain.

While *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* in Spain and the Philippines shared the commonality of a strong social component, the context of seventeenth-century Manila did affect the way these relationships played out—specifically, the presence of a large number of male, adult converts. In the setting of a child born into a Christian home, as was almost always the case in Spain, *compadrazgo* was a triangular relationship involving a baptized child, the biological parents, and the godparents. *Compadrazgo*, as described above, was applicable to children with Christian parents residing in the Philippines, but at the baptism of adult converts—whose parents were non-Catholic (*infieles*) and probably based in China—it was not a viable relationship. For these new converts, *compadrazgo* was a triangular relationship involving only adults, and between godparents and godparents (usually godfathers), on the one hand, and godparents and godsons, on the other. How coparents involved in the baptism of adult converts were linked to each other is unclear, but there is evidence that godfathers and godsons were intermeshed in relationships of mutual obligation, as will be discussed below. In contrast, the Western European conception of *compadrazgo*—as one binding a child, biological parents, and godparents—is clearer as a mutual obligation strategy when considering the evidence for Chinese mestiza families. While *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* are linked concepts, this article makes a distinction between the two because of the context of seventeenth-century Manila.

As mentioned above, in Manila *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* were used to create networks of mutual obligation. John Phelan (1959, 77) suggests that in the Philippines the trend was to choose godparents from a “superior social stratum, for the participants in the relationship were under some moral obligation to aid each other.” Phelan’s view is supported by my own examination of the baptismal record of the Parián (1626–1700), with several clear examples of Chinese seeking powerful patrons using this mechanism. For example, the Spanish Gov. Juan Niño de Tavora had at least three Chinese godsons in the 1620s, of whom one was head of the carpenters’ guild and another was a prominent godfather in the Chinese convert community.<sup>7</sup>

The mutual obligation aspect of these relationships forged by ritual kinship was decried by the Audiencia or High Tribunal of Manila, which issued an ordinance in 1599 accusing the Chinese of “having a great number of godchildren—both Christian and infidel—in order to use them

as false witnesses—to which they lend themselves with great facility, and at little cost—and for other evil purposes and intents, exchanging with them favors and assistance in their affairs” (quoted in *ibid.*, 77–78). The baptismal record of the Parián does support, in part, the Audiencia’s notion that the Chinese had a great number of godchildren. The top sponsor or godfather in the Parián had as many as 141 godchildren, and there were three other godfathers with more than fifty godchildren. Twenty-two other godfathers had ten or more godchildren. While the existence of godfathers with many godchildren does not unequivocally confirm that Chinese godfathers were using their godchildren for nonspiritual purposes, it does lend the Audiencia’s perception of the mutual aid nature of ritual kinship some credence. In addition, while the baptismal record of the Parián does not explicitly show a proliferation of godparents, it does suggest this phenomenon occurred because of several cases—forty-three to be precise—when godsons had more than one godfather.<sup>8</sup> If some Chinese had “a great number of godchildren,” and others sought out more than one godfather, perhaps they were indeed—as the Audiencia chafed—extending the Catholic ritual beyond its spiritual boundaries, suggesting that mutual aid was a primary consideration for certain Chinese in developing these relationships.

If mutual aid was one of the main goals of ritual kinship contracted through baptism, what rules governed when and how ritual kinship was chosen to solidify a mutual aid relationship? Drawing once again on the baptismal record of the Parián, I am able to discern three factors that influenced *compadrazgo* and godparenthood: (1) hometown ties, (2) trade specialization, and (3) gender.

The first two factors—hometown ties and trade specialization—mattered most when it came to mutual aid relationships involving converts. In the context of the Parián in the period under study, converts were adult males from the southeastern coast of China. These converts became integrated into kinship networks that linked communities in China to Manila to fill specific niches in the economy.<sup>9</sup> Some of the top twenty-five godfathers in the Parián sponsored heavily from certain hometowns. The clearest case of this strategy is that of a carpenter called Domingo Zuiteng, who was baptized in June 1627, aged 45. He was from *Qe Hue*, a locale that was connected to the county seat of *Tangua*<sup>10</sup> in Fujian province. Of his fourteen godsons, eleven were adults. Of these eleven, seven (about three-fifths) were from *Tangua*. Clearly, Domingo Zuiteng was recruiting from his hometown area; but how

do we know that he was recruiting godsons to be carpenters? After all only four out of eleven working-age godsons had their occupations listed. Of these four, three were from Tangua. Two Tangua godsons were carpenters and one was a wholesaler. What were the other Tangua godsons doing to earn a living? We cannot be sure but the baptismal record suggests a link between Tangua and carpentry in Manila for the years 1626–1633, the years when Domingo was most active as a godfather. When one searches for those listed as carpenters in the record, twenty-three out of thirty-two were from Tangua. When one looks at the years in which these carpenters were baptized, it is striking that all but one of the Tangua carpenters were baptized between 1626 and 1633. It appears that Tangua men had a grip on the niche of carpentry in Manila during these years. Therefore, one could venture a guess that Domingo Zuiteng's godsons who did not have their occupations listed might have been carpenters as well. When we take the case of Domingo Zuiteng together with the scholarship of Lucille Chia (2006), who has found that bakery workers from the town of Sandu in Fujian province worked together under a head baker from Sandu, one can assert, with some caution, that Chinese patrons created networks linking communities in China to Manila to fill specific niches in the economy. While there is a pattern of sponsorship linking hometown ties and trade specialization, the case of Domingo Zuiteng, with godsons from outside of the Tangua area, also suggests that this was not the only strategy that drove godparenthood.<sup>11</sup>

Chinese had ties beyond hometown association or trade specialization. A general overview of compadrazgo and godparenthood patterns in the Parián, shown in Table 1, confirms this. We see that, while Chinese godfathers were the main patrons in the jurisdiction of the Parián mission, Spanish godfathers also played substantial roles as patrons, though indigenous and mestizo godfathers played negligible roles as patrons for the Chinese in the 1600s. However, the overall pattern of compadrazgo described does not apply evenly to all sectors of the Parián. There was a clear differentiation in sponsorship patterns when one considers gender.

**Table 1. Godfathers by ethnic/legal categories in the Parián (1626–1700)<sup>12</sup>**

GODFATHERS BY ETHNIC/LEGAL CATEGORIES	COUNT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Chinese	2,326	80.18
Spanish	473	16.3
Indigenous/Mestizo	102	3.52

The pattern of sponsorship for females differed greatly from the overall pattern of the Parián mission already described. For females, there was a tendency to form ties with non-Chinese. For non-Spanish girls, fifty or nearly two-thirds had non-Chinese godfathers and only about one-third had Chinese ones. This proclivity becomes even more pronounced when we consider that most girls did not have godfathers. More than seven out of ten only had godmothers. In seventeenth-century Manila godmothers were most certainly not Chinese, there being almost no Chinese women in the Philippines prior to the mass migrations of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

To further illustrate the gendered strategies for building social connections through compadrazgo, let us now look at a Chinese mestiza family in the 1600s. The patriarch of this family was Diego de Paciencia Ang Quimco and the matriarch was Petronila de Jesus. Together they had ten children between 1678 and 1693, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Godparents of the children of Diego de Paciencia Ang Quimco and Petronila de Jesus, 1678–1693**

YEAR OF BIRTH	NAME OF CHILDREN	GODFATHER	GODMOTHER	GODFATHER'S OCCUPATION
1678	Maria Rosa	Francisco Samco	Dionisia Sta Maria	
1680	Ana de Jesus	Juan Felipe Tiam Nio	Melchiora de los Reyes	headman
1681	Christina de Jesus		Dorothea Mauricia	
1683	Francisco Geronimo	Luis de Gaspar		
1685	Clara de los Santos		María de la Concepción	
1687	Juana Florentina		Dorothea Mauricia	
1688	Laura Chitnio	Alonso Xue Co		carpenter
1689	Apolonia de Jesus		Theodora de la Concepción	
1691	Juan Pacheco	Diego Tiamco		
1693	Pasquala de Jesus		Luisa Sy Nio	

All the girls had godmothers, except for one, Laura Chitnio, and the two boys had only godfathers, a pattern that conforms to the overall Parián data. While it was not unusual from a religious perspective to have a woman as a spiritual guide for a girl and a man as one for a boy, the exception to the rule suggests that the choice of godparents also involved a social calculation. Laura Chitnio was the only girl without a godmother. She instead had a godfather: Alonso Xue Co, a carpenter. The unusual choice of selecting a godfather for a daughter, coupled with other circumstances such as the social status of the girl's father at the time of her baptism and the name choice for the girl, raises some questions concerning the purely spiritual nature of *compadrazgo*, at least for this family. Consider that Diego was registered with the honorific title "Don" for the first time in the record at Laura Chitnio's birth. Furthermore, Laura was the only daughter registered with a Chinese component to her name—Chitnio—translated as seventh daughter in the Hokkien language. Was Diego in need of forming a strategic relationship with Laura's Chinese godfather, the birth of his daughter providing an opportunity to do so? Was Laura given a Chinese name to emphasize her father's ties with the Chinese community? These questions are unanswerable with the available data and they do not rule out spiritual motivations for kinship, but I would suggest that mutual aid was the focus of *compadrazgo*, at least in this case. The case of Laura Chitnio suggests that being "Chinese," "mestiza," or "India" was dependent on familial calculations—Laura's Chinese identity was emphasized in her name while her siblings' mestizo identity was emphasized in their names. Racial designations in seventeenth-century Manila were not necessarily determined by biology, but socially constructed and based on calculated strategies of mutual aid and obligation.

So far, the patterns of coparenthood and godparenthood presented have touched on strategies utilized by Chinese converts and their families. It is unclear if these strategies were equally applicable to unconverted Chinese. There is of course the observation of the Audiencia members of 1599 which I alluded to earlier—that Chinese had a great number of godchildren both Christian and non-Christian. If we accept the Audiencia's observations as accurate, then one would suspect that similar strategies of using hometown ties and trade specializations would apply to non-Christians. As mentioned, Lucille Chia's work (2006) provides some evidence of this pattern obtaining for bakers in the 1680s. Chia does not say that the workers were godsons of the headmen but, taken together with the Audiencia's observations, I suggest

that coparenthood and godparenthood were practices that extended well beyond the confines of the church and the Parián mission.

### Credit

In addition to *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo*, the Chinese utilized credit to secure their persons and livelihoods. The Chinese extended credit to all sectors of society in Manila with an eye toward obligating debtors to protect them. The bishop of Manila, Fray Domingo de Salazar, in a letter dated 24 June 1590, entitled "The Chinese and the Parián in Manila," wrote that the Chinese

are so accommodating that when one has no money to pay for the bread, they give him *credit and mark it on a tally*. It happens that many soldiers get food this way all through the year, and the bakers never fail to provide them with all the bread they need. This has been a great help for the poor of this city, for had they not found this refuge they would suffer want. (Blair and Robertson 1903, 215, italics added)

Antonio de Morga, a justice of the Audiencia from 1595 to 1603, wrote in his *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609/1971, 307) that the Chinese

are very skillful and intelligent traders, patient and level-headed, so as to do their business the better. They are ready to allow credit and give liberal terms to those whom they know will deal squarely with them and will not fail in paying them in due time. On the other hand, however, since they are a people without any religion or conscience, and so greedy, they commit innumerable frauds and tricks in their dealings, so that it is necessary to be sharp, and to know the goods one is buying, so as not to be cheated. But buyers get even with them by playing tricks in their turn as well as by their faulty payments. So between one side and the other the judges and the Audiencia are kept busy.

In a letter to the King, Juan Grau y Monfalcon (1633?) wrote that the Chinese, "besides selling the merchandise for very suitable prices, *gave credit* for them until they came back again. Without spending money, the

inhabitants then were benefited, and sent the said merchandise to Nueva España, and made very great profits on it” (Blair and Robertson 1905, 135–36, italics added). From the smallest purchases to the big business of the Manila Galleon trade, Chinese credit seemed to lubricate the economy of Manila and create relationships of mutual aid and obligation.

Chinese who extended credit in Manila put those who borrowed from them in their debt. Governor Tavora noted in a letter to King Felipe IV in 1628 that “There is no Spaniard, secular or religious, who obtains his food, clothing, or shoes, except through them. Consequently, there is scarce a Sangley [Sangley being the Spanish term used to describe Chinese in the Philippines] who does not have his protector” (Blair and Robertson 1904, 250). It was not just the Spaniards who were indebted but also the indigenous and mestizo sectors of society. A list of debts owed to Chinese in 1689 included debtors by category: *españoles*, indios, mestizos, sangleyes, and criollos.

While it is clear that the Chinese were funneling credit into the economy, the question that is most relevant when it comes to the connection between financial networks and social implications is the impact these credit networks had on the preservation of Chinese persons and livelihoods: Were credit networks an effective means of ensuring protection as Governor Tavora claimed? My examination of a list of debts owed to non-Catholic Chinese compiled in 1689 and a list of non-Catholic Chinese *gremio* (occupational guild) members of 1690<sup>13</sup> suggests that the governor was correct. Those with broad connections with members of colonial society fared the best and those without strong Spanish connections—meaning those without Spanish debtors—were the most vulnerable in times of crisis.

The year 1686 was such a moment of crisis for the Chinese in Manila. In September of that year, a royal order to expel the non-Christian Chinese from Manila arrived from Spain. A Chinese uprising barely four months prior in May 1686, a record number of Chinese arrivals onboard ships, and fears surrounding Chinese conspiracies to wrest Manila from the Spaniards as evidenced by the accusations leveled against the bakers of Manila spurred the colonial government to comply with the royal decree, which was formulated based on a conceptualized “ideal” number of 6,000 Chinese.<sup>14</sup> A group of Chinese merchants quickly responded to the impending expulsion by writing a petition explaining the indispensability of the Chinese to the colony and also requesting time to “collect debts owed

them.” A postponement of seven months was granted, and many Chinese sought to be included in the lists of those owed money to avoid expulsion, if only temporarily.<sup>15</sup> From the lists compiled, I constructed a database of 767 names and identified those with strong and broad connections in colonial society and those without.<sup>16</sup>

Those with strong connections with Spaniards or with others fared well in times of stress. Some companies even added personnel during the crisis (Table 3). The two most dramatic increases were those of the guild of ironsmiths and that of the chicken sellers. In 1689 there were eight ironsmiths, and in 1690 there were nineteen. Those listed in 1689 could all be traced in the 1690 record, and all had ties with the three main sectors of society: Spaniards, indios, and Chinese. Among chicken sellers, seven had contracts in 1689 with Spaniards and no one else. All seven were traceable in the 1690 record. They could possibly have been contractors (*asentistas*) for the Spaniards. The chicken sellers increased their numbers in 1690 to seventeen.

**Table 3. Number of personnel of *Gremios de Sangleyes Infieles* in Manila, 1689 and 1690**

<i>GREMIOS</i>	1689	1690
Ironsmiths	8	19
Chicken sellers	7	17

As for the largest *gremio*, that of the silk merchants, in the 1689 list, the shops with the most personnel were: the shop headed by Dem Bunco (nine merchants), the shop headed by Un Thonio (ten merchants), and the shop headed by Ong Y Yocco (twelve merchants). In the 1690 list (Table 4), Dem Bunco’s silk shop had lost six merchants, Un Thonio’s shop had lost three merchants, and Ong Y Yocco’s shop had lost four merchants. Others who were in the 1689 list but not in the 1690 list were those from the Leng shop. There were four merchants affiliated with Leng’s shop in 1689. All four were not on the list in 1690. All the other silk shops had two merchants each and all were still around in 1690 with the same number of merchants. Despite the hardships surrounding the expulsions, small silk merchants were still able to stay in business. They must have had strong connections to stay in the game. Two of the biggest shops—those headed by Un Thonio and Ong Y Yocco—still maintained far larger numbers of personnel than their competitors, but one big shop—Dem Bunco’s—lost two-thirds of its personnel and became

about the same size as its competitors. This information suggests that bigger shops had the flexibility to adjust the size of operations to keep up with changes in the business environment.

**Table 4. Number of personnel of the three largest silk shops of Sangleyes Infieles in the Parián, 1689 and 1690**

OWNERS OF SILK SHOPS	1689	1690
Dem Bunco	9	3
Un Thonio	10	7
Ong Y Yocco	12	8

The expulsions from 1690 to 1700 reduced the number of immigrants to Manila and affected the size of large businesses, as seen in the case of silk shops. Were those from larger businesses opting for other destinations like Taiwan or Batavia? It would seem that larger businesses could afford to reallocate resources to other destinations *without* losing their position in Manila. Those with small businesses had much more to lose. Having attained a certain level of success, they faced a large risk in leaving Manila. The merchants of these smaller shops would have had to rely on their financial and social connections to keep their businesses profitable, especially when the social climate was fraught with danger.

Those without strong Spanish connections became vulnerable to expulsion. As suggested by data shown in Table 5, oil sellers, boatmen, and fishermen did not have strong financial connections with the Spanish or other communities. For example, no oil sellers had outstanding debts with any sector of society, and many in the 1689 list were not listed in 1690. In other words, their financial and social connections were minimal. This pattern supports the assumption that those without such connections were the most vulnerable to expulsion. Similarly boatmen saw a dramatic drop in their numbers from thirty-seven to only six from 1689 to 1690. Twenty-three of those thirty-seven boatmen did not have deals with others in 1689. Most of the ones who had deals did not have Spanish connections and mainly dealt with Chinese and indios. Perhaps this is why their names were not traceable in the 1690 list, if we assume that having strong Spanish connections was the most important factor in avoiding expulsion. Laborers formed another vulnerable group. Almost all had no outstanding deals with others. As for fishermen, there were seventy in 1689 and of these twenty-nine had no debt connections with others. In 1690 fifty-six were left, indicating a decrease of

twenty-four—about the same number as those who had no recorded deals with others. Taken together, this information supports the view that those with a lack of ties lived most precariously when help was needed. That those who extended the most credit fared best while those who did not fared worst suggests that in colonial Manila one could indeed buy friends—or at least protectors—if one could afford them.

**Table 5. Numbers of members of Gremios de Sangleyes Infieles in the Parián, 1689 and 1690**

OCCUPATIONAL MEMBERS	1689	1690
Oil Sellers	11	2
Boatmen	37	6
Fishermen	70	56
Laborers	33	20

Those who extended credit were in a financial position to do so. They were either wealthy enough to give credit or had access to capital. In the preamble to the debt list of 1689, the *fiscal* (Crown attorney) describes a hierarchy of creditors. The relevant parts of the preamble are as follows:

A list of non-Catholic Chinese resident in the Parián of Manila according to what I have been able to obtain as information in part . . . from the reports of Catholic-Chinese with more credit and means called the heads of the Parián. I have understood that these heads have contracts with Spaniards and Indians and other Chinese who have contracts with Spaniards and Indians. These heads also have contracts with Chinese without contracts with Spaniards or Indians. . . . Even though some Chinese do not have deals or business dealings with Spaniards or natives (*naturales*), they have such dealings with other Chinese. The Chinese who do have dealings with Spaniards and natives cannot terminate business deals with Chinese who do not have such dealings until they have settled their accounts with Spaniards and natives. They say they cannot pay their Chinese creditors until they have charged their Spanish and indigenous business partners. (AGI 1689, my translation)

What we have here is a hierarchy of creditors. Wealthy Chinese were giving credit to other Chinese who in turn were giving out credit to

Spaniards and indigenous people. There seem to have been two sources of credit: (a) Chinese headmen, who seem to have been the meeting point of credit networks for Chinese, Spanish, and indigenous, and (b) wealthy Chinese who dealt exclusively with Chinese, who in turn extended credit to others. The headmen's power would probably have derived from their intermediary position in the colonial economy. The wealthy Chinese creditors whose point of contact with the Manila economy was through other Chinese would probably have had to resort to other means of securing their investments. Did they work through headmen? Did they rely on Spanish legal mechanisms—courts and contracts—to secure those investments? Did they hold power in China that could affect those who borrowed money? These questions are as yet unanswered but deserve attention. Whatever the answers, the *ability* to extend credit was crucial in gaining political connections. Those who lacked the means lacked the connections that could be parlayed into protection from crises like expulsion, imprisonment, lawsuits, or labor service.

One point to ponder is why indebted Spanish powerholders did not expel the Chinese to liquidate their debts. In the preamble to the debt list of 1689, the fiscal stated that the Chinese had given a loan to the Crown in times of need. The reminder that Chinese had extended credit to the Crown itself suggests that the Chinese had a bargaining chip. The expulsion of Chinese had to be considered in the context of their crucial role in the credit economy of Manila. The fiscal seemed to be conveying to the Crown the necessity of the Chinese and that their expulsion could not be carried out with justice or without damaging the reputation of the Crown. If Spaniards wanted to be seen as credible, they had to allow at least the collection of debts owed to the Chinese.

### **Possible Brotherhoods**

Because not all Chinese could afford to buy connections, perhaps some of these less fortunate fellows had to resort to other means of protection like secret brotherhoods or, in desperation, outright violence. The existence of secret brotherhoods as an organizing structure for certain Chinese has yet to be explored but there are clues in Bartholomew Argensola's *Conquista de las islas Malucas* that suggest the possibility of such an organization. Writing on the 1603 Chinese uprising in Manila, Argensola (1609/1708, 216, 221) provides these tantalizing tidbits:

The Chief and General of the Kingdom of China, call'd Ezequi, and another of the Tribe of Su, called Tym, following the Dictates of heaven in this Affair, that all the Chinese may unanimously joyn in this work, and obey them, in order to root out these enemy robbers, are willing that Yochume and Quinte, Japoneses, in Conjunction with us Sangleyes, do conquer this city, and when we have subdu'd it, we will divide this country, even to the Grass of it, equally between us, as becomes loving Brothers.

Next appear'd the Ring-leaders of the Mutiny, and it was prov'd against them, that they had set up a pole on the place call'd el Cerro, or the Hill of Calocan, and on it a black Flag, with two Chinese characters on it, which imported CUN TIEN, the significance whereof is, IN OBEDIENCE TO HEAVEN.

The language of brotherhood and the raising of a flag with the inscription “In Obedience to Heaven” is suggestive, if speculative, of the possibility of secret brotherhoods in early colonial Manila.<sup>17</sup> The membership of supposed brotherhoods and their link with violence remains uncharted. If violence was linked to a failure to forge ties with powerholders in Manila, the multiple uprisings of the seventeenth century linked with the Chinese would perhaps be an indicator of the importance of kinship and financial networks in holding together colonial society.

### **Conclusion**

The Chinese extended credit and contracted ritual kinship to create or solidify networks of mutual obligation within their own community and with other residents of Manila. By adapting in this manner, the Chinese participated in transforming practices like *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* to suit their specific needs in a particular place and time. In the context of seventeenth-century Manila, the presence of large numbers of male adult converts from southeastern China meant that *padrinazgo* or godparenthood became exaggerated in ritual kinship relationships and had to take into consideration the Chinese need to recruit fellow tradesmen. *Compadrazgo* or coparenthood became a strategy to integrate children into and connect families to different sectors of colonial society. The Chinese, contrary to nationalist narratives that paint them as inassimilable aliens, were personally

invested and connected to the indigenous, Spanish, and mestizo communities as husbands, fathers, in-laws, godfathers, and godsons. In short, they were kin and a deeper bond could not be had.

Kinship was not the only tie that bound in seventeenth-century Manila. Certain Chinese of means were connected to larger colonial society by the purse strings. By giving out loans, the Chinese fed and clothed the city; they filled its coffers with coin for trade and for the business of government. In exchange, the Chinese called on debtors in times of crisis.

Through kinship and credit, the residents of Manila negotiated empire, mitigating the restrictions of legal frameworks and identities through which imperial bureaucrats sought to understand and control colonial society. While the intermingling of Chinese, Spanish, indigenous, and mestizos challenged imperial domination, the relationships that bound the various communities together were, among other things, what made colonial society stable and viable. As a testament to the strength of these bonds, we need only be reminded that colonial Spanish society persisted against great odds in Manila for over three hundred years.

## Notes

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1 This recreated description of the seventeenth-century Manila Parián is based on accounts of Bishop Salazar (1590) and Bartholomé de Letona (1662). Salazar's account entitled "The Chinese and the Parián at Manila" can be found in Blair and Robertson 1903, 212–38. For the original Spanish, see "Carta-relación de las cosas de la China y de los Chinos del parían de Manila enviada al rey Felipe II. Desde Manila, á 24 de junio de 1590" reproduced in W. E. Retana 1897, 47–80. See Blair and Robertson 1906, 204–5, for Letona's account.

- 2 Edgar Wickberg (1965, 36), the preeminent scholar of Chinese in the Philippines, lamented that "Information about the internal structure of the Philippine Chinese community prior to 1850 is difficult to obtain." Ch'en Ching-ho's (1968) slender volume, *The Chinese Community in the 16th Century Philippines*, is the only book-length manuscript to study the Chinese in early modern Manila, but even this work does not say much about the internal organization of the Chinese.
- 3 Wang Gungwu (1990, 413–14) notes that the "Spanish sources, on which much of our information depends, focus so much on the China–Mexico trade, on the Chinese threats to Spanish authority, and on the potential conversion of the Chinese to Catholicism that they do not mention what institutions the Chinese themselves used to provide solidarity or further their business efforts." William Schurz's (1939/1959) study of the Manila Galleons is majestic in its oceanic scope and focus on global connections but his treatment of the Chinese displays many of the Spanish concerns Wang Gungwu points out above. The collection of essays edited by Alfonso Felix Jr. (1966) remains an important contribution to scholarship on Chinese life in early Spanish colonial Manila. Although the essays in this volume are helpful in painting a general picture of Chinese relations with Spaniards, they are preoccupied by questions of Chinese assimilation into the Filipino nation.
- 4 Nariko Sugaya has been publishing on the Chinese in the early colonial Philippines since the 1990s. Her work on Chinese marriages and conversion to Catholicism in the latter half of the eighteenth century (Sugaya 2000) and Lucille Chia's article (2006) are the only two works I have found that deal directly with Chinese social networks in early modern Manila. In examining the massacre of 1603, José Eugenio Borao (1998) locates the Chinese of Manila within a larger context of transoceanic trade and connections with Chinese officialdom. Borao's perspective is useful in considering the links Chinese in Manila had with China.
- 5 Both lists can be found in Filipinas 202 at the Archivo General de Indias (AGI). The 1689 list is that of debts owed to non-Christian Chinese and is entitled "Compulsas de los autos hechos en virtud de la real cédula de 14 de noviembre 1686 sobre la expulsión de los sangleyes infieles." The 1690 list records members of various non-Christian Chinese occupational guilds or *gremios* and is entitled "Carta de la Audiencia de Manila: Alonso de Abella Fuertes, Juan de Ozaeta, Lorenzo de Avina Echevarría y Juan de Sierra Osorio, sobre lo obrado en la expulsión de los sangleyes. Manila, 25 de junio de 1690."
- 6 John Phelan (1959, 77–78) points out that, in contrast to Spain, the tendency in the Philippines and the Americas "was to expand the number of people involved" in ritual coparenthood. Antonio Irigoyen López (2012), however, provides a different view. His study of ecclesiastical godparenthood in early modern Murcia suggests that the propensity to multiply godparents to establish social ties was an entrenched custom in Western Europe by the end of the Middle Ages and that at the Council of Trent, "in an attempt to restore the exclusively religious nature of baptism, the Church ruled on how the sacrament was to be celebrated and the number of godparents admissible" (*ibid.*, 74).
- 7 Don Juan Niño de Tavora's godsons were Joseph Tien Chan (baptized May 1627), Domingo Zuiteng (baptized June 1627), and Don Philippe Leong Bia (baptized October 1627). This information comes from a baptismal book of the Parián of 1626–1700. The mentioned book can be found in microfilm form at the archives of the University of Santo Tomas and is catalogued in the Sección de Parián as Libro de Bautizos Siglo XVII 1626–1700, Rollo 47, Tomo 2.

- 8 The data quoted come from a database I compiled based on the Libro de Bautizos Siglo XVII 1626–1700 mentioned in note 7. The database contains 3,117 names of those baptized and other information connected to baptisms such as place of origin and age of the baptized, parents' and godparents' names, occupations of the baptized and of godparents, residence of parents and godparents, and caste. Information in the categories listed was not always complete since the baptismal record did not always have details for all the mentioned categories. All other analyses of the Libro de Bautizos in this article come from connections I have drawn based on the database I constructed.
- 9 My analysis of the Libro de Bautizos indicates that the following were the top ten known places of origin for those baptized in the Parián: Tangua/Tong'an (15 percent), Samtou/Sandu (13 percent), Anhay/Anhai (7 percent), Siali/? (6 percent), Emuy/Xiamen (6 percent), Haicheng/Haicheng (4 percent), Chiobe/? (4 percent), Tiooa/Changtai (4 percent), Chiangchiu/Zhangzhou (2 percent), and Pe ta/? (2 percent). I was able to place most of the top ten known places of origin in Fujian province and have given their corresponding Mandarin names in the above list in the following format: Hokkien place name as perceived by scribe/Mandarin pinyin place name. The identification of places of origin was not always straightforward and, in many cases, is still a work in progress. A catalogue of places found in Martino Martini's (1655/2002) *Novus Atlas Sinensis* gives place names in Fujian province with their corresponding longitude and latitude and is helpful in understanding the possible Spanish understandings of places in Fujian given the exchange of information between mapmakers and Europeans dealing with China. Lucille Chia (2006) also gives a list of Fujian place names in her article. In cases where Chia and DeMarchi and Bertuccioli were silent, I was sometimes able to find a remark in the baptismal book left by the scribe linking a place name unknown to me at the time with a known place name identified by the authors mentioned. When comparing the top ten sending communities for baptized immigrants in the seventeenth century with Edgar Wickberg's (1965, 172) data on nineteenth-century Chinese migration patterns to the Philippines, it becomes apparent that certain communities maintained long-term migration links with the Philippines. Tong 'an and Jinjiang counties (Anhai was in Jinjiang county) continued to send large numbers of migrants to the islands. On the other hand, Sandu, a major sending community in the seventeenth century, is not listed by Wickberg as a major sending community. Inquiries into the reasons for the persistence and diminution of migration from particular communities should consider conditions in China as well as the Philippines and other possible migration destinations at different points in time.
- 10 Tangua in Hokkien is rendered in Mandarin as Tong 'an.
- 11 Nariko Sugaya (2000, 560), in a paper delivered at the Intercultural Relations and Cultural Transformation of Ethnic Chinese Communities (ISSCO) conference in Manila in 1998, suggests that, in the latter half of the eighteenth-century Philippines, when selecting witnesses for marriages, Chinese in the Manila area "preferred to select those who lived in the same locality rather than to nominate the people from the same hometown." Although marriage and godparenthood are not identical rituals, they both revolve around kinship, and it might be worth considering that similar concerns entered the equation when Chinese chose ritual kin. Building on this link, Sugaya's article suggests that hometown ties and trade specialization were not the only factors that drove Chinese in kinship relationships. Instead, as Mark Dizon (2011, 368) argues—though for missions on the Caraballo Mountains in the early eighteenth century—kinship was not necessarily tied to economic concerns but was "processual and continuously constructed through everyday acts, such as sharing food and living together." Perhaps friendship

cultivated through everyday acts was just as important as rational calculation when it came to ritual kinship. After all, slightly less than a third of godfathers in the Libro de Bautizos had more than five godchildren. For the vast majority of those baptized, no clear reasons tied to place of origin or trade specializations could be discerned.

- 12 When trying to determine the legal designations of godparents, my assumptions were as follows: "Spanish" godfathers were determined by the identifiers *español*, *criollo*, place of residence (*vecino de Manila*), were members of Spanish nobility, had the title of "doctor" (*licenciado*), or held office reserved for Spaniards (governor, *oidor*, *aguacil maior*, *arzobispo*, and others). In a few instances there were no clear indications that a godfather was a Spaniard. In such instances the decision to categorize the godfather as "Spaniard" rested on naming conventions. For example, I assumed a person with a surname containing a preposition of origin such as "de Leon," "del Castillo," or "de Aragon" was a Spaniard given that such surnames were not often associated with non-Spaniards. Article 9 of Narciso Clavería y Zaldúa's (1849/1973) decree on surnames stipulates that "Families who can prove that they have kept for four generations their surname, even though it may be the name of a saint, but not those like **de la Cruz, de los Santos**, and some others which are so numerous that they would continue producing confusion, may pass them on to their descendants, the Reverend Fathers and the heads of provinces are advised to use their judgment in the implementation of this article" (Abella 1973, xi). The quoted article implies that leading up to 1849, second names—since surnames were not the norm for the indigenous population, family members usually not maintaining a common family name—of the indigenous population were often linked with saint names or religious imagery, to the point of causing great confusion for Spanish administrators trying to identify individuals for state purposes. Based on Clavería y Zaldúa's decree, I have surmised that those with saint names as second names were *indios* unless otherwise stated. Priests did annotate castes at times but not often. I also assumed that those with Basque surnames such as "Olarte," "Arriaga," "Mendiola," "Leuzarte," and "Exguirre" were most likely Spaniards. There were of course exceptions to the rule. Antonio S. Tan (1986, 145) points out that a "Don Mendiola" baptized in 1632 was actually a Chinese who had taken his godfather's surname as his own. I still see the adoption of Spanish surnames and the dispensation of Chinese names as exceptions in this period, given the proliferation of Chinese names in the baptismal record of the Parián. The main point to consider when dealing with Spanish second names/surnames is that there is always the possibility of error when trying to pinpoint someone's legal identity when the sole identifier is a Spanish name. While there are surely errors in identification in my categories, my main conclusions still hold given that many of those I classified as Spaniards had occupations reserved for Spaniards (*oidor*, *factor*), were of the Spanish nobility (*sobrino del duque*), or had educational or clerical titles (*licenciado*, *doctor*, and *arzobispo*). Chinese were more easily identified by having Chinese names appended to their Christian ones. There was of course the possibility that some of these were mestizos and indeed some were, but only in rare instances could I find someone with a Chinese name identified as a mestizo. For example, for 21 Mar. 1657, the godfather was an "Alonso Bucu mestico." This suggests to me that, unless someone was perceived as or self-identified as a mestizo, he was Chinese if he had a Chinese name.
- 13 Both lists can be found in Filipinas 202 at the Archivo General de Indias (AGI). See note 5 for more details on the lists.

- 14 In the uprising of 1686 some Chinese broke into the house of the constable in charge of residence permits and killed him and another Spaniard and attacked the house of the governor of the Parián, who managed to escape. Lucille Chia's (2006) "The Butcher, The Baker and the Carpenter" is perhaps the best account of this uprising and groundbreaking in its focus on the impacts of sojourning on southern Fujian.
- 15 The merchants had a petition written in Spanish but signed it in Chinese, affixing their red seals at the end of the letter, which can be found at the AGI ([1689?]) in Mapas y Planos: Escritura Cifra 59. Lucille Chia (2006) also makes reference to this petition, as does Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo (1966). Chia provides a neat summary of the points made by the merchants to delay expulsion. The main points were that the Chinese needed time to "collect debts owed them by Spanish and Chinese who did business with Spanish and they could not pay until the Manila Galleon came in," the indispensability of the Chinese in provisioning the city, the tax of non-Chinese residents for residence permits constituting a chief source of income for the colonial government, loans by the Chinese which regularly covered the expenses of the colonial government till the royal subsidy (*situado*) arrived from New Spain, and the possibility of trading with others should the Chinese be expelled. I would add, the merchants mentioned that Dutch and English had that year gone to China with much silver and only the care of the Chinese for their debts (figurative and literal?) in the islands drove them to return to the Philippines.
- 16 In order to reach these conclusions, I constructed a database of 767 names based on the 1689 and 1690 lists. In the 1689 lists, names of merchants were listed with debts owed by people stated by racial category. For example, an entry might read for the guild of silk merchants: "Dem Bunco tiene tratos pendientes con españoles, indios, mestizos y sangleyez" (Dem Bunco has deals with Spaniards, *indios*, mestizos, and Chinese). Following Dem Bunco's name would be a list of other merchants with the annotation "tiene tratos pendientes con los mismos" (has deals with the same). At intervals, the compiler would write that a certain merchant had deals with "Spanish, indios, Chinese" or other groups like mestizos (mixed ethnicity, usually Chinese and indigenous) and criollos (Spaniards born in the Philippines). I noticed that the compiler would not state "has deals with the same" even when the categories were the same, even when the categories were repeated after every two or three names. Furthermore, the compiler took the trouble to differentiate between singular and plural when mentioning those with whom the merchant had deals. For example, the compiler would distinguish between "Spaniards" (*españoles*) and "Spaniard" (*español*) or have an annotation that might read, "tiene tratos pendientes con español, mestizo y indios" (has deals with a Spaniard, mestizo, and indios). I thus surmised that the compiler was referring to specific debtors even though he did not name them. The preamble to the 1689 list states that the list was compiled with the help of Chinese headmen and also from the books of the Chinese. If this is true, then I imagine the compiler must have worked through the financial books of the various Chinese companies sorting out debtors into the five legal/ethnic categories that appear in the list—Spaniard, mestizo, indio, Chinese, and criollo—and then entered them into the list, with the head merchant's name appearing first and all subsequent junior partners following his name and hence the annotation "has deals with the same." There were "partners" (*compañeros*) without deals indicated in the list, further suggesting that the list was indeed compiled from actual financial records. The key assumption underlying my ability to judge who the head merchant was and also groupings of merchants forming companies is that the annotation "the same" referred to specific individuals.

- 17 That Chinese insurgents in 1603 named Japanese as possible partners in overthrowing Spanish authority also hints at the fluidity of intersocietal connections at the time.

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